## CLAIMS

1. A system for allowing an application using a first implementation of a metadata schema to access data stored using a second implementation of a metadata schema, comprising:

    means for specifying an evolved property definition in the first implementation to refer to a corresponding property definition in the second implementation, for each property in the first implementation that is different from a corresponding property in the second implementation; and

    means for redirecting accesses using the evolved property definition to access the corresponding property definition in the second implementation.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the means for specifying comprises:

    means for executing stored instructions for deriving one schema from another.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein the means for specifying comprises:

    means for accessing stored information describing two schemas; and

    means for determining a difference between the two schemas.

4. A system for allowing an application using a first implementation of a metadata schema to access data stored using a second implementation of a metadata schema, comprising:

    means for specifying a synthesized property definition in the first implementation for each property in the first implementation that lacks a corresponding property definition in the second implementation; and

    means for maintaining information about accesses to the synthesized property definition.

5. The system of claim 4, wherein the means for specifying comprises:

    means for executing stored instructions for deriving one schema from another.

6. The system of claim 4, wherein the means for specifying comprises:

    means for accessing stored information describing two schemas; and

    means for determining a difference between the two schemas.

7. A method for allowing an application using a first implementation of a metadata schema to access data stored using a second implementation of a metadata schema, comprising:

specifying an evolved property definition in the first implementation to refer to a corresponding property definition in the second implementation, for each property in the first implementation that is different from a corresponding property in the second implementation; and

redirecting accesses using the evolved property definition to access the corresponding property definition in the second implementation.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein specifying comprises:

executing stored instructions for deriving one schema from another.

9. The method of claim 7, wherein specifying comprises:

accessing stored information describing two schemas; and

determining a difference between the two schemas.

10. A method for allowing an application using a first implementation of a metadata schema to access data stored using a second implementation of a metadata schema, comprising:

specifying a synthesized property definition in the first implementation for each property in the first implementation that lacks a corresponding property definition in the second implementation; and

maintaining information about accesses to the synthesized property definition.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein specifying comprises:

executing stored instructions for deriving one schema from another.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein specifying comprises:

accessing stored information describing two schemas; and

determining a difference between the two schemas.

13. A system for allowing an application using a first implementation of a metadata schema to access data stored using a second implementation of a metadata schema, comprising:

means for detecting a mismatch between a stored object of a class from the first implementation and the metadata schema of the second implementation describing objects of the class; and

means for notifying the second implementation of any detected mismatch.

14. The system of claim 13, further comprising:

means for correcting the mismatch.

15. A method for allowing an application using a first implementation of a metadata schema to access data stored using a second implementation of a metadata schema, comprising:

detecting a mismatch between a stored object of a class from the second implementation and the metadata schema of the first implementation describing objects of the class; and

notifying the first implementation of any detected mismatch.

16. The method of claim 15, further comprising:

correcting the mismatch.